Medical research

582. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian and USA have signed an agreement to collaborate on medical research aimed at developing low-cost diagnostic and therapeutic technologies for a range of diseases and would enable the two countries to undertake joint biomedical research towards developing better tools to treat diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV;

(b) if so, what are the other main features of the agreement;

(c) by what time, the agreement is likely to be implemented; and

(d) to what extent, it has been helpful for both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) Joint Statement between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and U.S. Centres of Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Deptt. of Health and Human Services was signed in Washington DC on June 7, 2005. The silent features of the agreement are as under:

- Building of capacity including sharing of expertise in the operation of high containment laboratories and safe handling of high hazard viruses and bacteria, development of protocols and standard operating procedures, collaborate and share expertise in the areas of epidemiological design, diagnosis, vaccinology, immunology, hematology and molecular virology.
- Developing, as well as refining, of repositories with more detailed characterization of strains stored in them, exchange of diagnostic reagents, protocols, equipment, quality assurance, reliability of laboratory results and flow of information.
- Strengthening capacity to identify new pathogens during outbreaks, including field investigation strategies, collaboration and training of staff in ICMR laboratories and at HHS/CDC, establishment of partnership between laboratory response and field epidemiology teams, analysis of pathological material during outbreaks of unknown etiology and development of diagnostic reagents for newly discovered agents.

The implementation Plan between the The National Institute of Allergy and Infections Diseases of the National Institute of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the ICMR relating to expansion of Indo-US cooperation on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and disease surveillance was signed on 16th October, 2007. ICMR currently is in process to initiate various activities under the plan indicated. The activities involved in the agreed plan relate to research work, which is an on-going process, therefore, the time schedule for implementation of plan can not be indicated at this stage. However, it is envisaged that this partnership will increase joint activities in scientific discovery, research innovation and reinforce existing research cooperation, scientific training and capacity development efforts.